

الهجرة الدولية ظاهرة حديثة بسهل تادلة

International Migration as a Modern Phenomenon in Tadla's Plain

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الملخص:

شهد سهل تادلة ظاهرة الهجرة الدولية منذ ثلاثينيات القرن الماضي، مقارنة مع باقي الأقاليم التي توجد بشمال المغرب أو بجنوبه، التي عرفت هاته ظاهرة مع بداية القرن العشرين. لكن مع اندلاع الازمة الاقتصادية بالدول الرأسمالية سنة 2008م، وتخلي المؤسسات الإنتاجية عن اليد الأجنبية العاملة، ظهرت ازمة جديدة في دورة الهجرة يصطلح عليها في ادبيات الهجرة بهجرة العودة. أدت الى عودة العديد من المهاجرين الى مجالاتهم الاصلية، وبذلك تأزمت الأوضاع الاقتصادية والاجتماعية بمختلف الأقاليم المصدرة للهجرة.

الكلمات المفتاح: الهجرة الدولية، هجرة العودة، التنقل عبر الحدود.

Abstract

The current paper discusses the phenomenon of international migration and trans-border mobility. In this regard, the historical background of international migration is discussed with special reference to the Arab World, especially Morocco. New paradigms of mobility were created like political mobility resulting from refugee crisis in Syria and return mobility of Moroccan migrants in the plain of Tadla which is the case in point in this article. The percentages and the reasons of such type of migration vary according to the areas' specificities and characteristics. Moreover, the host countries also constitute a major reason behind migrations. Thus, any change that occurs in the host country may affect positively or negatively the return of migrants in Tadla's Plain.

Keywords: international migration, return migration, trans-border mobility

Introduction:

International migration is considered a modern phenomenon in Tadla. It influenced the social and the economic structures of this area. The social structure of Tadla's migrants seems to have some obvious alternations. Their migrants started to avoid kinship relationships and are now driven to individualism. Moreover, the economic structures are influenced by migrants' financial transfers. The migrants' remittances created new investment projects in the area and more job opportunities for the population of Tadla plain. According to researchers who have tackled this phenomenon in Tadla, this international migration was active in the seventies, eighties and nineties of the last century.

I. The historical evolution of international migration at the level of Tadla plain:

The history of international migration in Tadla region seems to be a recent event compared to other Moroccan regions. Furthermore, we cannot tackle the issue of migration in isolation of its national and international contexts.

1.1. The migration of Maghrebi people in the early years of colonization:

After the French conquest of Morocco in 1912, the French protectorate in Morocco needed laborers to work in France and in the colonies. Thus, some Moroccans traveled to Algeria to work in the French agricultural farms. Moreover, a great number of people from Souss region migrated to France. This was the first migration flow to France in 1909.

In this period, more precisely in 1914, France created an agency called "Colonial service workers". The protectorate authorities also deported between 34.000 and 40.000 thousand Moroccans to participate in the First World War (1914-1918). The French authorities called it at that time "North African Army". When the Second World War ended in 1945, the French occupation brought Moroccan workers to its land to reconstruct what had been destroyed by the war, especially after the adoption of Marshall's plan to rebuild Europe.

During the independence period, Maghrebi migration knew a historical turning point. This phenomenon increased very fast. In 1959, the number of the Moroccans who permanently migrated to Europe amounted to 3000 persons. Then the number increased to reach 8000 persons in 1960 and to 17.000 migrants in 1963. In 1974, the number of migrants was raised to reach around 30.000. During this period of time, migration was characterized by individuality and masculinity towards some specific European countries such as France, Belgium, Holland,

Germany, etc. This rapid rise of the European economy was called “The Glorious Thirties”. Therefore, Europe increased its demands of North African labor to rebuild the continent.

In the mid-seventies of the last century, the number of Moroccan migrants reached around half a million in Europe, which is 3% of the Moroccan population at that time. However, the European economic crisis led to the stagnation of the European and the global economy. This resulted in unemployment, and the number of migrants to Europe reduced. In this period, a considerable number of European countries changed their policy towards migration. Therefore, those countries formulated some laws in order to reduce the number of migrants. Germany was the first European country to establish those laws in 1973, and then it was followed by France in 1974.

In spite of those policies, the European countries knew another form of migration. The migrants brought their families to Europe in what was called at that time “family gathering”. This pushed the European countries to legalize that process. For example, Italy established a law called “Boss-Fini” so as to integrate this category in the European culture.

In the eighties, a new evolution occurred in migration. Female migrants, with different ages and different cultural backgrounds, started to immigrate alone and to depend on themselves. After signing the Maastricht Treaty, Europe knew fundamental changes in its migration policy. Once the Schengen treaty was signed between its members in 1985, it started to be more difficult to immigrate to a European country.

1.2. History and evolution of international migration in Tadla

International migration in Tadla occurred in the beginning of the 1960s, especially in the area of Eddir. Nonetheless, the researchers of this phenomenon have stressed that this region had known migration movements since 1939.

1.2.1 The historical evolution of international migration in Tadla

This phenomenon can be divided into three stages and each stage has its own features and its events. The first stage starts from the French occupation to the end of the seventies. The second stage starts from the mid-eighties till 2008. The third stage marks the birth of return migration in after 2008.

A) From the beginning of French occupation to the end of the seventies:

The entrance of French Occupation to Tadla in 1913 is considered an important event in the social memory of the region of Tadla. This caused changes in the economic and the inherited traditional social structures of the region.

After controlling the area, the French occupation started to renovate the agriculture sector so as to exploit the area's natural resources. The French protectorate created a watering system in Bni Amir in the thirties and another one in Bni Mousa in the fifties.

At that period, a considerable number of French settlers settled in Tadla. Most of them were interested in agriculture and the export of agricultural products. The colonial authorities gave them all the materials and human resources in order to exploit the agricultural land in a good way. Furthermore, the French settlers created job opportunities for the people of Tadla plains. They also helped some workers to immigrate to France, especially after the independence. In general, the international migration in Tadla started early in 1939, but it remained very weak and did not get attention until the period of the seventies and eighties.

B) The escalation of the migration phenomenon from the mid-eighties till 2008:

In the beginning of the eighties, international migration increased in Tadla's plain. A considerable number of young people left their home towns towards new constructed European countries such as Italy and Spain.

In this period of time, we found that the international migration included the poor areas as well as the rich areas. Many factors contributed to push Tadla's youth to migrate to Europe. The first reason has to do with the difficulties young people face in their own country while looking for a job. Another reason is related to the increasing number of unemployed graduates. Furthermore, the modernization of agricultural sector was not followed with the industrial evolution. Less attention was given to the industrial sector, more particularly to transformative industries. This situation put both rural areas and urban areas in crisis. One of the reasons is also related to the government's structural adjustment program, which led to the removal of subsidies on many plantations. This affected negatively farmers' income. In addition, drought periods in the eighties contributed in the low level of ground water which also impacted on the agricultural production. In parallel with this, Italy and Spain started to attract foreign labor to meet their needs in the construction and farming sectors.

The international migration phenomenon has become deeply rooted in the region of Tadla. Thus, it has become the main concern for the residents of the area. The topic of migration to Europe has become a daily subject of discussion, and the main question was not 'Why did you immigrate?' but rather 'Why you did not immigrate to Europe?'

C) The post-2008 period: the birth of return migration:

The increasing pace of international events has led to the expansion of the migratory crisis in the home countries. The tension which has been witnessed in the Arab World since 2011 and which has also been known as the Arab Spring had a great impact on the birth of huge waves of migrations to the North. This issue was so intense in the areas of civil wars like Libya and Syria, which has led to the inflation of the European work market by the working hands of the refugees from war and political instability, let alone the constant flow of sub-Saharan migrants to the European territory. In front of these human flows, North African and European countries remain helpless. However, these migrants have stumbled over a number of obstacles, the chief of which is the Mediterranean Sea which has caused dozens of death to the extent that this [sea](#) in 2014 was considered the most dangerous one worldwide.

Table 01: The distribution of returning migrants according to regions (in 2004).

Regions	The Total of Returnees			National Percentage
	Number	The percentage of urban areas	The percentage of rural areas	
The Eastern Region	26150	82.56	17.43	22.3
Grand Casablanca Region	23293	99.66	0.33	19.9
Rabat, Sale, Zmour, Zaiir	13696	98.21	1.78	11.7
Sous, Massa, Dara	12858	51.26	48.73	11.0
Tangier-Tetouan	10390	93.48	6.15	8.9
Meknes-Tafilalt	5052	84.08	15.91	4.3
Marrakech-Tansift- Elhaweze	5032	73.76	26.23	4.3
Taza-Elhoceima- Tawnat	4460	52.69	47.30	3.8
Fez-Boulman	4134	94.33	5.66	3.5
Doukkala-Abda	2910	78.35	21.64	2.5
The West, Chrarda, Bni Hssin	2700	80	20	2.3
Echawya-Wardigha	2398	82.81	17.18	2.0
Gelmim-Smara	2009	45.44	54.55	1.7
Tadla-Azilal	1370	74.45	25.54	1.2
Eloyoun, Boujdour, Saqia Elhamra	416	96.87	3.12	0.4
Oued Dahab, El Gouira	264	99.62	0.37	0.2
Total	117132	83.52	16.48	100

Source: The General Census of Population, 2004

Thus, in parallel with the regression of Moroccan migrants to Europe, the expansion of returning migrants to Morocco has increased. According to the general census of [2011](#), almost 117.132 Moroccan migrants have returned to their home countries. This is a new phenomenon which has been witnessed by all the regions of the Moroccan Kingdom.

It is observed from the table above that the percentage of returning migrants is huge in the Eastern region as it has reached 22.3% of the total of the Moroccan returnees. The reason behind this is attributed to the fact that this area has constituted an international migratory area for many years ago. In recent years many among migrants have returned to their hometowns after retirement. The same can be noted for the Region of Sous-Massa-Daraa.

As for the region of Tadla-Azilal, which is now known as Beni-Mellal Khenifra under the advanced regionalization policy which has recently been adopted by the Moroccan government, is observed to have no more than 1370 returnees, which represents almost 1.3% of the total number of returnees. The majority of them are those who lost their jobs and found themselves obliged to return to the home country for the sake of starting new projects in their own cities or villages.

1-2-2 The inclusion of the cities and margins by returning migrants

Table 02: The International migration in the Province of Beni Mellal in 2007

City or Town	The host country				Total
	Spain	Italy	Franch	Others	
Tizi-Nisli	37.20	13.95		48.38	100
Zaouiat Chikh	10.76	17.43	44.61	27.17	100
Kasba Tadla	66.66	26.65	3.25	3.42	100
Ouled Ayad	50	44.96	2.01	3.02	100
Tanougha	64.79	13.66	19.08	2.45	100
Sou Sebt	46.16	43.55	5.92	4.35	100
Dulad Said El Wad	100				100
hl Lmorabaa Town	93.18	6.81			100
Fkih Ben Saleh	4.65	38.91	0.39	56.03	100
Aghbala	79.45	1.88	20.33	1.31	100
Oulad Youssef	12.22	87.31	0.45		100
El Kssiba	18.78	12.85	64.29	4.06	100
Bni Wakil	2.62	94.02	0.03	3.31	100
Bni Chagdal	2.23	97.61		0.15	100
Dar Ouled Zidouh	57.77	42.05	0.16		100
Tagzirt	63.03	17.34	18.5	1.11	100
Krrifat	3.46	96.37	0.1	0.05	100
Ahad Boumoussa	41.01	58.98			100
Nkar Sidi Aissa	56.08	41.66	1	1.24	100
Beni Mellal	45.37	32.73	14.12	7.76	100
El Bradia	60.54	37.89	0.6	0.96	100
Afourrar	79.16	8.33		12.5	100

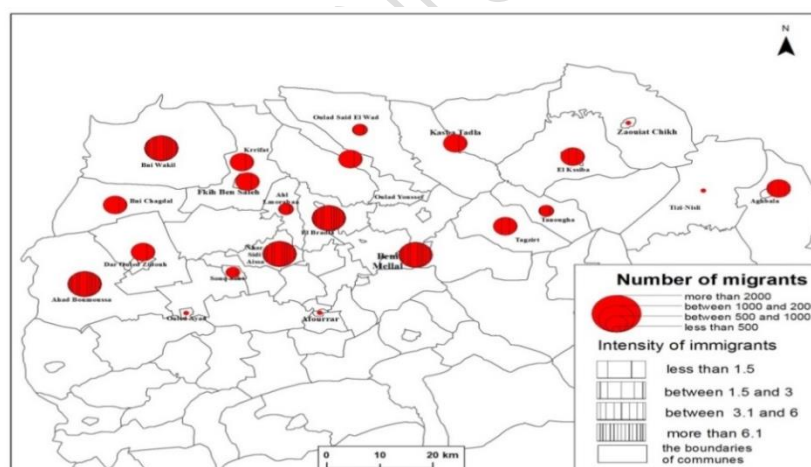
Adapted from Beni Mellal-Khnifra's Municipality, 2007

The number of returnees in the plain of Tadla and the neighbouring areas reached almost 1370 migrants in 2007. However, it is observed that the geographical distribution of those migrants differ from one city to another.

It is observed from the table above that almost 62.69% of the total number of migrants belong to the area of Bni Amir, whereas almost 37.30 % migrants belong to Beni Mossa and Beni Mellal areas. At the level of rural communes, we can observe that almost 49.88% of migrants belong to only five municipalities: Bradia, Beni Mellal, Ngar, Sidi Aissa and Ahed Bomoussa. In addition to this, we can find 9 communes which include more than 72.37% of migrants. These include Lbradia, Beni Mellal, Ngar, Sidi Aissa, Bni Wakil, Ahed Bomoussa, Kriffat, Tagzirt, Dar Ouled Zidouh, and Kasbat Tadla. Seven of these communes are on the plain and two of them on hills (see Map 01).

The centralization of migrants in Bni Amir area is attributed to the fact that the latter has witnessed a huge wave of international migration recently and that migration trends have started from it to Italy and Spain during the 80's and 90's.

Map 01: The International Migrants in the Plain of Tadla



Adapted from Beni Mellal-Khnifra's Municipality, 2007

2- The settlements of migrants in Spain and Italy

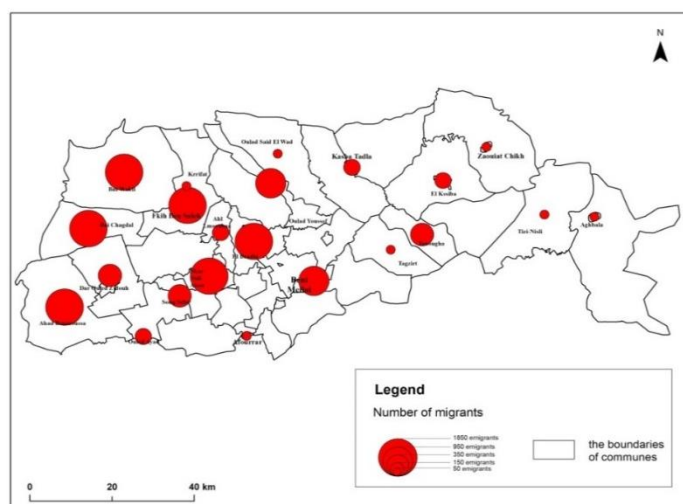
Both Spain and Italy have received an increasing importance by the migrants who belong to the different subareas of Tadla as it is shown in Table 2. Thus, we find almost 90% of the total of migrants settled in these two European countries, whereas 10% have chosen to go to other countries like France, USA and the Gulf countries.

2-1 Italy and the migrants from Tadla plain

It is worth pointing out that the migration of the residents of Tadla towards Italy dates back to the 60's and 70's of the 20th century. However, it should be asserted that this wave includes

fewer numbers, the majority of whom belong to Bni Amir as they are centralized in five rural communes (Krifat, Bradia, Bni Chagdal, Bni Wakil, Ahel Lmoraba). More than 40% of migrants from these communes migrated to Italy, whereas the other percentages are distributed to different cities and towns of the Plain. Worth noting is that the migration to Italy started from the suburbs of Beni Amir and Beni Moussa (Ahad Bomoussa) in contrast to the urban places in the plain. (Map 02)

Map 02: Number of migrants to Italy in the Plain of Tadla



Adapted from Beni Mellal-Khnifra's Municipality 2007

Starting from the mid 80's, this country, Italy, has begun to witness the flow of a number of migrants coming from Beni Amir area and the other places of the Plain and its suburbs. Some of the migrants have migrated illegally (buying counterfeited work contracts, sham marriage, and clandestine migration etc.). A number of these migrants have settled in cities and suburbs of European countries where they worked in the sectors of commerce, industry or agriculture. At the level of the host country, Italy witnessed a late phase of economic growth under Capitalism. Its economy was gradually developing in a slow manner up until its integration in the European Union in 1957. Upon this event, the economic system saw a relative jump and development, which required working hands from the third world countries.

2-2 Spain, the second country for migrants of the Plain

After Italy, Spain is considered to be the second country where almost 43.77% of Tadla migrants live. Most of them belong to the following rural communes: Elbradia, Sidi Aissa, Ahad Bomoussa, Tagzirt, Dar Ouled Zidouh along with Beni Mellal, Souk Sebt and Oulad Ayad (Map 3). The majority of these migrants went to Spain during the 1990's where most of them worked in masonry and agriculture. Most of the migrants from Beni Moussa go to Spain, in

Spain is considered the nearest territory to Morocco. However, it is the second ranked preferable region for the migrants of Tadla. The factor of geographical proximity is not decisive in limiting the emigration to Spain given that emigration toward Italy had started ever since the 50's of the 20th century as the economic system of Italy had known a growth ever since that period, especially after the entry of Italy to the European Union in 1957. This led to the emigration of work force from Tadla to Italy. As for Spain, it did not know any kind of economic growth up until its entry to the European Union in 1985. Since then, its economy has grown rapidly in industry and agriculture, which attracted many migrants from Tadla and the Arab world as a whole.

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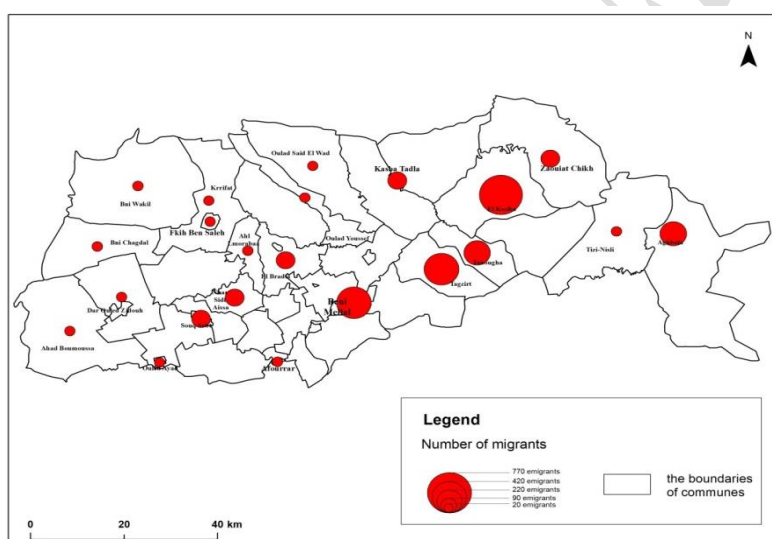


Despite the fact that the migration of Moroccans to Europe is old in history, it is observed that a few number of them settled there. Among the international emigrants who originate from the Plain, we find that 6.75% live in France. The majority of these migrants belong to the piedmont area known as the **Dair**, viz. Lkssiba, Beni Mellal, Tagzirt, Aghbala and Tanogha

(Map 4). Some of these migrants departed from these areas during the 60's after they had got work contracts in France.

The colonization factor and postcolonial ties are the frequent explanatory reasons behind the migration of Tadlawi people to France. The French colonial administration brought many workers from the north of Morocco to work in the French Metropolis, which increased its economic growth upon the expansion of its colonial territory in the Third World countries. Besides, the colonizers established strong relationships with the colonized, which created a network of relationships that facilitated the mobility of several individuals towards the French territory. The French colonizers focused on some areas similar to the French areas (Lksiba, Beni Mellal, and Tanogha) considering the northern western areas as areas for agriculture.

Map 04: Number of migrants to France from the Plain of Tadla



Adapted from Beni Mellal-Khnifra's Municipality, 2007

Conclusion

International migration is considered a recent phenomenon in the Plain of Tadla. It has started ever since the 70's and expanded in the 80's and 90's of the previous century. Several external and internal factors have contributed to the development of this phenomenon in the exchange zone. The local factors were manifested in the increase of the joblessness rate in rural areas and in the light of the inability of the agriculture sector to provide new and stable jobs. Besides, the lack of agriculture industry (food industry) decreases the creation of new job opportunities and economic dynamicity in the Plain, which may make the Plain a pulling area rather than a pushing one. Notably, the Plain has long been considered a fertile ground for agriculture in the country. However, this phenomenon has not been accompanied by any industrialization or developmental activities due to a number of obstacles.

As for the external factors, they have been incarnated in the emergence of new pulling areas like Italy and Spain, which motivated many individuals of the Plain to migrate. The Italian economy has grown since 1957 upon its integration in the European Economic Community. This, in turn, led to the growth and even the inflation of numerous economic sectors, which created an increasing need for the working force from abroad. Thus, many migrants from Tadla rushed to Italy for work. As for Spain, its economic system has not grown up till 1984 after its integration in the European Union. Thus, it has witnessed an economic growth, especially in the industrial and agriculture sectors, which also has created a need for work force in this country. Accordingly, many people from Beni Mellal and Beni Moussa migrated to Spain.

The social and economic changes witnessed by the whole world, in general, and Europe, in particular, after the stiffening economic crisis of 2008 happened as a result of the development of migration to Europe. These changes left negative social, economic and psychological impacts on migrants themselves or those willing to migrate in the light of the new austerity measures adopted by European countries against the crisis. This has led to the relegation of job opportunities and the increase of living costs in these countries, which pushed many Tadlawi migrants to return and invest in their home country by creating new projects.

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